1:McDermith E-5 (1922-1924)948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

in dances. In front of most houses rises a short totem-pole,[1] either pierced for the doorway, or standing on the opposite side of the sidewalk.

The Family

It is probably no exaggeration to say that in every part of the world the most important social unit is the family. It certainly is among the Bella Coola, yet its lack of definite social obligations makes it difficult to define. Reduced to minimum size, the family consists of a man, his wife, or wives, and his children. Such a unit occupies one of the bedrooms of a large house, and it is to such a family that an infant automatically belongs at birth. Disregarding for the moment ceremonial obligations, which are shared by others, it is the father and mother who are responsible largely for the upbringing of the child. Such education as he receives comes from them, with the assistance of members of the ancestral family. This is chiefly imitative; a boy, as he increases in strength, follows his father on hunting expeditions or fishing. The mother teaches her daughters how to make baskets, and they follow her when she gathers berries, or when she cooks and performs household duties. The Bella Coola are fond of children, in many cases to the extent of over-indulging them, and they grow up amid the open life of the large houses, absorbing information of all kinds without being aware of so doing.

Only two kinds of functional training need be mentioned. A wise father carefully trains his sons to remember their debts (I, p. 369), and the method of teaching ancient myths has already been described; otherwise there is little direct instruction. On the other hand, parents devote great care to furnishing their children with every possible means of strengthening their supernatural elements on which success depends. These can

[1] Since the Bella Coola believe that totem poles were used by their ancestors in early times, they are included in this description of a village, without reference to their development in post-European times. This account is compiled from descriptions given by elderly informants; it is inevitable, therefore, that changes due to European contact may be included.

I: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

with the others, including the one who had just been leader, as followers. It is said that there was rarely friction among the joint husbands, since each realized that his turn would come as head of the household, and meanwhile the wife endeavoured to share her favours indiscriminately. The children were considered equally the offspring of each husband, thus automatically acquiring membership in several ancestral families. Such were regarded as indeed fortunate, provided with every potential means of assistance in the struggle of life.

595 556 [851]

Recognizing its importance, every effort was made to verify this information. Further questioning elicited the statement that the informant had never seen a case of this, though he asserted that when a young man he had often heard of it and that the custom had then only recently died out. Another old man and an elderly woman confirmed the above statement almost word for word, and each added that it was well known when they were young, though they had never actually seen it in practice. One man believed that the custom had formerly prevailed in several parts of the coast, and said that he had heard of its occurrence among the "Kwatrino" people near Newitte. Considering the reliability of his informants, the writer gives as his personal belief that the institution of polyandry among the daughters of chiefs occurred in Bella Coola not many years ago. Knowledge of the term of address for co-husband, already given, is strong evidence in support of this view.

128 595 556

DISCREDITABLE MARRIAGES

Since it has been assumed that Y is the daughter of a chief, properly married with due formality, it is necessary to digress still further from the account of her relations with X to describe connections of a less creditable nature. The most common of these was with slaves. Though frowned upon by all Bella Coola ethics, such alliances, of a permanent nature, do not appear to have been rare. In some cases it was a man who thus demeaned himself, in some a woman. Since no slave could provide the goods necessary for an elaborate wedding, the

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6:Boas E-5 (1886-ca. 1890)1892
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

The gens Spatsá'tlit have breakers painted on the house-front, and use in dances the mask of a large kind of whale (*k'wate*), of the crow, and of the black bear.

The gens Tumqoá'akyas use the mask of Ônxstaitô'mx (=the sleeper) and the eagle.

The gens Tl'ah-nemô'ot of the Nusk-'ĭ'lstkmh use the moon (fig. 2).

The gens Ialo'stimôt of the Tâlio'mh use the raven, robin (*aist'a'qoad*), eagle, whale, the bird *t'ăxtlala* (genus?), and *s'allal'ots*, the flood-tide. They have sun, moon, and stars painted on the house-front, and the wasp'-nets suspended from the beams of the roof (see p. 420).

The highest gens of Nâil'x'l has the name Smô'kn (=the north wind). He has the mountain Sawâ'knh surmounted by a mackerel sky, and with clouds on its sides, painted on his house-front (fig. 3). Another object belonging to his crest represents waves.

The children belong to the gens of either father or mother, the decision being left to the choice of the parents.

Secret Societies and the Potlatch.

The social organization, festivals, and secret societies of the Bilqula are still more closely interrelated than they are among the Kwakiutl, and must be considered in connection. We have to describe here the potlatch, the Sisan'kn, and the Kê'sôt. The Sisan'kn corresponds to the Tlôola'qa of the northern Kwakiutl tribes, the Kê'sôt to the Ts'êtsê'ĕk'a. The Bilqula believe that the potlatch has been instituted by ten deities, nine brothers and one sister, the foremost among whom is Qê'mtsios, to whose care the sunrise is intrusted. He resides with the others in a beautiful

Fig. 4.—Mask representing Qê'mtsios.

Fig. 5.—Mask representing Qêmqêmalâ'otis.

house in the far east, and arises at every morning when the sun rises. He has to take care that the sun rises properly. The first six of these deities

6:Boas E-5 (1886-ca. 1890)1892
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

844 fessional midwives. The child is washed in warm water. For ten days
[846] the mother must remain in this hut. Father and mother must not go
[825] near the room for a year (according to Nuxk'sla'eta, for ten days), else the salmon would take offence.

553 The child is soon given its first name. On this occasion the whole
[852] tribe is invited to a feast, the name is made public, and the guests receive
[554] small presents. The child retains this name until it becomes a member of the Kû'siût, when it is given its Kû'siût name. This ceremony takes place after puberty has been reached. About this period the young man gives his first potlatch and assumes the Qê'mteica name.

881 When a girl reaches puberty she must stay in the shed which serves as her bedroom, where she has a separate fireplace. She is not allowed to descend to the main part of the house, and must not sit by the fire of the family. For four days she must remain motionless in a sitting posture. She fasts during the daytime, but is allowed a little food and drink at a very early hour in the morning. After this term she may leave her room, but only through a separate opening. She must not yet
[292] come to the main room. When leaving the house she wears a large hat,
[821] which protects her face against the rays of the sun. It is believed that if the sun should shine on her face her eyes would suffer. She may pick berries on the hills, but must not come near the river or sea for a whole year. She must not eat fresh salmon, else she would lose
[262] her senses, or her mouth would be transformed into a long beak. She
[261] must not chew gum or eat snow (see Fifth Report of Committee, 1889, p. 838).

584 If a young man wishes to marry a girl he goes, surrounded by his
[431] friends, to the house of the girl's father and states his intention. His friends carry food and presents, and if the father accepts the suit he sends out a young man, who receives the food and presents and carries them into the house. Sometimes the father does not accept the offer at
[527] once. In such cases the young man may repeat the same ceremony until he is finally rejected or accepted. After the time of the marriage has been agreed upon between the contracting parties, and the day preceding the marriage has arrived, the young man invites all the people to a feast, during which he states that he is to be married on the following day. He asks a number of men, generally from twenty to thirty, and four
[302] women to assist him. On the following forenoon they assemble, and accompany the bridegroom to the girl's house. They sing outside, and
585 four of the men dance. All of them have their faces painted red. Finally they enter, and the bridegroom gives a large amount of property to the girl's father. Then the girl leaves her parents and goes to the bridegroom, bringing him also a large amount of property which has been
[431] given to her for this purpose by her parents and relatives. He in turn gives her blankets and other apparel of the best quality, and distributes presents among her relatives. This is repeated after some time. All he has given to his bride and her relatives is repaid to him with interest. A rich girl will repay twice or three times the amount given by the man. At the time of the marriage the bride's father may promise the groom to give him his Sisaa'kn secrets as soon as the pair have their first child.
[851] The children may belong to the father's or mother's gens, as the parents may choose.

586 In case of a separation the wife refunds the amount of purchase-money. The children may stay with either parent, or part of them may

words of Kwakiutl derivation will become clear by a glance at the following list, which contains words that can be proved to be of Kwakiutl origin:—

[illegible] = chiefs.

[illegible] = speaker.

[illegible] = the greatest chief.

[illegible] = a fabulous bird.

[illegible] = the copper maker.

[illegible] = name of Thunderbird's (the reading, the designation "woman" in Kwakiutl).

[illegible] = mythological name of river.

[illegible].

[illegible] (p. 98).

[illegible] = the country of the salmon (p. 98) (Kwakiutl, sun) = salmon.

[illegible] (pp. 99, 99).

[illegible] (p. 70) = the soul (Tsimshian).

[illegible] (p. 70).

[illegible] (Kwakiutl, [illegible] = the southmost one.

[illegible].

[illegible].

[illegible] (p. 98) = the wealthy one.

[illegible] (p. 98) = the wealthy one.

[illegible] (p. 99) = rich or opposite side of river.

[illegible] (p. 99) = wealthy at mouth of river.

[illegible] (p. 99) = the one who must be worshipped.

[illegible] = a fabulous fish or snake (pp. 98, 99, 98).

[illegible].

[illegible] (p. 99) = the town.

[illegible] (p. 98) = west.

[illegible] (p. 98) = the greatest chief.

With these names and customs the clan tradition must have found their way to the Bella Coola, but their social organization differed fundamentally from that of the Bella Bella branch of the Kwakiutl. While the latter, owing to intimate contact with the northern tribes, had adopted the four-clan system with prevalent maternal descent, the Bella Coola were still distinctly divided into village communities that were not exogamic. It seems very likely that the jealousy with which the ownership of a clan tradition was guarded by the Coast tribes was very early introduced among the Bella Coola. Two means were available for preventing outsiders from acquiring the traditions. Among the Coast tribes with prevailing maternal institutions, among whom a limited number of clans existed, the ordinary law of inheritance was sufficient to retain the tradition inside of the clan. Not so among the Bella Coola. If their organization at an early time was similar to that of the Coast Salish, it is likely that the child was counted as well a member of the father's as of the mother's family, although the young woman generally moved to the village occupied by her husband. If the child belonged to the families of both parents, it had the right to use the tradition of either family; and consequently in the course of a few generations, the traditions acquired by each family would have spread practically over the whole tribe. There were only two methods possible to avoid this result. The one was to prevent marriages outside the village community; and this method would seem to have been most natural for a tribe organized in village communities, members of which were allowed to intermarry. The other method would have been to regulate the laws of inheritance in such a way that the child had to